

This interview deals with one specific set of photographs by Holly King. These were performance pieces made for the camera, rather than a document of a performance. She does both.

INTERVIEW WITH HODLY KING, NOVEMBER \$? L(\*@

H.K. This work is a transition from older work. One of the things that I wanted to eliminate was the notion of a very specific sequence of events that was occurring in the work. I was dissatisfied with that, with the idea that once you looked at the first photograph you could kind of zoom through all the rest to find out what happened...I wanted to work more with single images as opposed to working with a narrative sequence.

K.T. Did you consider them to be sequential in terms of time.

H.K. Often there was a discrepancy between the order that they were shot in and the order in which they were presented. And that led to some confusion on the part of the viewer which I found interesting.....Some thing that I found important is that in all of these pictures, everything has been built for the photograph; nothing is foundAll the objects and the imagery is made just or painted just for these pictures as opposed to been chosen from somewhere else.

K.T. As opposed to being a set for a performance?

H.K. No I meant it in the sense that the imagery

is fantastical as opposed to ordinary things, a  
table or a chair. They aren't things that can  
be pulled from reality, from circumstances  
already existing and then put into the set. They  
are all things that are made for the set for  
the photographs. And that to me is the most important  
part of them.

K.T. Exotic or eccentric?

H.K. I see them as relating to the domain of myth  
and of fairytale. That's what I would like to be  
working towards. Sort of strange things that  
are put together with a feeling behind it, myth or  
fantasy, something like that. I wouldn't use the  
word exotic although other people have; maybe  
it's hard to see your own work as exotic because  
you know it so well...

K.T. Source material?

H.K. It comes from my source of things. Some  
things are flashes, quick flashes; a picture I might  
see in my mind. Others are much more studied; I  
do quite a lot of research. I do a lot of  
reading; in this series, I looked at a lot of books  
on Greek and Roman statues.. On the body you can  
see the veins of the marble that were drawn on, it  
was supposed to be painted up like a marble statue..  
The work actually comes from performances that I've  
done; that was the original basis of the work.

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[I wanted to make a photograph which looked like  
it was the result of a performance piece and  
one of the things I was working on in the last per-  
formances was body positions. I was interested in  
how you could build up a kind of personal vocabulary  
through the repetition of various ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ simple  
movements and gestures; particular gestures  
which were particular to myself and to the work.  
So in the photographs I wanted to work with that  
notion, and was able to do so because ~~The photograph~~  
would arrest the moment and therefore I would make  
a particular gesture even more powerful and more  
apparent.] And that was one of the reasons  
why in this series I chose the image of a  
statue because that seemed to me particularly apt  
for a gesture that had been stopped

M.K. Importance of the reference to sculpture?

H.K. Not in this particular series. I didn't  
consider that when I was making it. I think it's there  
not that it is done and I look at it; but it  
wasn't my intention. The next series that I'm working  
on, yes, because it is a reference to the Renaissance.  
I think that's something that I'm interested in for the  
future.

K.T. Why photo?

H.K. The only reason that I chose it was that  
it could stop a moment. In the last performance



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there were a lot of stopped moments. Frontal stop, side back. It was sort of a syncopation that was built into the piece... And photography does work that was, [One of photography's inherent systems is stopping moments.]

I could never see myself drawing all this stuff, it would take too long. It was the easiest way to ~~capture~~, to put down what I wanted.]

...But the invention part is very important as opposed to capturing moments as in Cartier Bresson.

(3) [But, its a very different usage of <sup>Cartier-Bresson's</sup> ~~that~~ notion of capturing reality. Invention, fabrication is important.]

K.T. Representation

H.K. Yes. I could never paint everything as clearly as I would like it to be seen. And the physicality of the paint would enter into the content and it wasn't really the comment that I had intended.

I used the system that was the most appropriate. One thing that I am really enjoying is trying to put some drawing and painting back into the photographs..

I often conceive of the photographs first as drawings; I draw them out before I end up building anything for the set and then in the set..

I think I would miss the tactile experience of painting and drawing and fabricating something if I was to just go and take a picture of something that was already existant. So for me painting the body, which was an incredibly arduous task; it took about four and a half hours to make everything the way it should be. That fulfils a need that I have to make

to fabricate

H.K. Oh that was supposed to be wind. This is supposed to be like a house and this basic structure will repeat itself through many series that I want to do. What happens is that the roof changes in each one. The first one is a house, the next is a dome, the next is a castle. So in this one I wanted it to be a house with wind going through it; that was the quiet kind of movement that I wanted. And the statue is kind of quiet too, and still and classical. Kind of like the winds of time sort of thing you know. So those were just strips of plastic tied from one side of the room to another on a whole gridwork of strings and I had someone taking the pictures; do dhr would hit the self timer and she would grab the strings and move them up and down.....

K.T. Do you always use yourself as a model

H.K. Most of the time. I have used a man for a few series that I did. It always just seems easier to use myself. Its not out of an particular autobiographical position that I have in mind; it just that some of the things that I do, painting up myself; I dont think I would feel right asking someone to go through five hours slathered with cream and grease and stuff. Its just much faster for me to use myself.

K.T. Do you use other sources for the photos. Writing

H.K. Very often...

K.T. is it important that people recognise that this is a statue?

H.K. Tricky. Some people see it right away and some people don't at all. I guess I would prefer that they do. I think people get the sense of something really stopped, of the body stopped and that is really the essential characteristic of a statue. So if they don't really recognise it as a statue but they see that that it is a body that is still and has been stopped often in kind of an odd position...that it's been stopped dead in its tracks and would never really move again, if people get that then I don't mind if they don't see it as a statue

K.T. Why is the activity of stopping something important?

H.K...I think it had to do with my not feeling comfortable about telling stories as such. I sort of felt at one point that I really couldn't think about any good stories to tell...eg. Duane Michaels...  
So therefore I felt more comfortable having small moments as opposed to one whole thing

H.K. Are they documents as often used documents of a performance.

H.K. They're not documents of a real event. Its  
sort of a reversal of the whole thing because my  
original interest was to do a sort of a performance  
but for the camera only. to not go out in public  
and do it....I think there is a confusion in the  
work as to how they were done. People cant figure out  
if it was done for the camera, or if it was a real  
piece. I find that really interesting, that  
confusion, a sort of tautology that turns around,  
turns on itself and strikes off again.

M.K. If I saw these photos and I saw photos,  
documents of a performance I'm not sure that I  
could tell the difference.

M.K. That's quite possible. But usually they are sort  
of grainy and they have a whole lot of technical  
problems to them which make it difficult to see  
what was happening. So in that sense, I think the  
clarity in these ones would cause them to be different  
from real documentary photos of performance.....

365...house description..380...symbol of house,  
modification and adding things..403.. framework  
for props and activities, situation the other elements  
in the picture412 illusion

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